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"INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE  
AS AN INSTRUMENT OF DIPLOMACY"  
BEFORE  
THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD AFFAIRS AT RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA  
DECEMBER 17, 1952

The effectiveness of any media of psychological warfare depends to a large extent upon the kind of a foreign policy we have. And, correlative, the ways in which we conduct psychological warfare may have a tremendous impact upon our future foreign policy, especially as to particular countries or areas.

Psychological warfare is of two kinds, the overt or open, the covert or secret. While other terms of distinction have been employed such as white and black and even grey, none is completely descriptive and I say this as a result of some years of experience grappling with these questions during the last war while serving in the Army attached to U.S.S.

Hundreds of specific media have been employed in both kinds of psychological warfare, some of which should not be revealed for security reasons. But it is not so much with the specific media that I am concerned today but rather with a general approach.

In order to simplify my brief assignment, I have selected as my topic "Indigenous Psychological Warfare". By using the adjective "indigenous", I am talking about propaganda or information which is disseminated from within any given country whose attitudes we are trying to influence as distinguished from propaganda from the United States directed at any such target country.

Such propaganda can be both open or secret, overt or covert, white or black, but its wellsprings are from within and not from without. It need not necessarily come purposely and directly from us but may be spread from within by a reflection of our actions in the minds of those who know and understand us in other countries.

Let us assume that we want to convince the people of Burma that we are peace loving, that we did not start the aggression in Korea, that we are not the Imperialists which the Stalinists claim we are. This is no idle question, because millions of people in Asia are sorely troubled on this point.

What would be the best means of convincing the Burmese?

Would a broadcast from America, written in Burmese in San Francisco, explaining and properly defending American intentions, beamed at the people of Burma, be more effective e.g. than a program originating over a Burmese station or editorials or news articles in the local language press conceived and expressed by fellow Burmese, who in the milieu of their own countries' intrinsic attitudes, reach Burmese as "made in Burma" rather than "made in America".

Parenthetically, I intend no criticism of the Voice of America program. It is needed and I support it. It has done immeasurable good because millions of people throughout the world want and need to hear it.

But our idioms of expression are not always those which receive free acceptance abroad. For this reason, we must not confuse our self-interest, which is simply the preservation of individual liberty and freedom, with our own methods in this country. The areas of self-interest must be redefined -- sufficiently at least to allow greater tolerance for the unique and individual characteristics

of other peoples, other societies, and other religions. There must be a flexibility sufficient to carry the free world through innumerable differences of method -- a flexibility which will unite it on basic necessities.

How much more effective ideas are, coming from within, than ideas which are impressed from without. The concepts of social organization are translated poorly, at best, from one nation to another. In the end it is more by our actions, the spirit of which is caught by other countries, than by our public expressions that we will be known. For public expressions must be based on more than enthusiasm and methods; their only valid basis is performance.

My point, therefore, is one of emphasis and mindset. If, while strolling through the bazaar section of Cairo, in a country disturbed in its relations with the West, you see an American get into a serious argument with some Egyptians, which would help that American more (whether he is right or wrong) -- intervention by you on behalf of your American stranger, or an

effort by some Egyptian, in a spirit of fair play to step in and straighten it out?

In this cold war between the United States and Russia, which we want to win and must win, the crucial question is whether or not this country is willing to make the kind of effort that will win or keep friends and influence peoples. For if we aren't willing to make the needed effort to this end, we may as well abandon all efforts in the field of psychological warfare except purely strategical and tactical media in support of military operations.

What ideas do we want to convey to the rest of the free world in support of our foreign policy, whatever that over-all policy may be?

Do we want to export, by pressures, the American free enterprise system? If so, I'm afraid we shall fail, no matter how successful our methods have been here. For the sum of our experience as to our unique American methods means little or nothing to most of the other peoples of the world, particularly

our goals and aims are similar, yet our methods of achievement must vary greatly.

On the ground of claiming that we are footing the major costs, do we want to impose upon our allies and upon all neutrals our ideas as to how aggression may be stopped or freedom preserved? If so, we may lose our allies and stymie any real influence we may have with our neutrals.

Would it not be better to encourage the widest possible consideration of varying views on stopping aggression? A case in point is the recent Indian compromise proposal for a truce in Korea which recently was approved by the United Nations by an almost unanimous vote, with only the Soviet Union and its satellites voting against it. In this case, it would appear that the United States had for over a year been unwilling to give serious consideration or approval to most of the Indian proposals with reference to the Korean war, some of which undoubtedly were not based upon good intelligence. But, at long last, a compromise proposal was worked out by negotiation which brought unanimity among the nations of the free world. It must

have been heartening to many of the peoples of Asia to realize that the western world had given such convincing proof of their interest in the cause of peace that they were willing to accept the recommendation of an Asian nation -- one which has been consistently neutral in the cold war.

Although it is tremendously important that Russian communism be contained, we must not, because of excessive preoccupation with the cold war, lose the support of substantial segments of the remaining free world.

To take another example: Neither an Indian peasant nor a Greek merchant is vitally interested in our material standard of living. He is interested in his own. Parading the spectacle of our wealth does little to convince him that his freedom and security are related to our wealth or dependent upon our standard of living. We must realize that we are not superior in all things; that we may yet learn from the Arabian teacher and the Indian philosopher. And so, let us, instead, compare peasant to peasant and merchant to merchant, wherever they may be. For that comparison

selytizing solely on the basis of those advantages.

Great powers are never popular abroad, and we are no exception. Any American who has done any extensive travelling abroad in recent years is well aware of this.

In all the free world, few, if any, love us, some respect but misunderstand us, many fear and some outright distrust us.

To win support in the fight for the collective defense of the free world against aggression, we have a horrendous task.

For one thing it has been estimated that Russia is spending a billion and a half a year on psychological warfare and that we are spending only about one-tenth as much.

And whether we like it or not, their propaganda on the whole is effective and even though false is often plausible, especially in poverty stricken countries.

We must realize also that the Russians employ tactics in their subversive psychological warfare which are distasteful to us. While some of their subversive activities are extremely effective, both here and abroad, it is to be hoped that we can

methods being employed and as a result, the communists will lose rather than gain by the pursuit of such methods. Nehru's blast about ten days ago against misuse of embassy privileges is a case in point, although the Soviet Union was not specifically mentioned.

Nevertheless, on the whole, from Teheran to Saigon, from Casablanca to Calcutta, and from Cairo to Bombay, the Russian communists have been making serious inroads into the thinking of many millions of peoples in the free world.

It is therefore all the more important that we utilize our ideological weapons with greater imagination, understanding and professional skill than we have up to this point and in increasing intensity and extensity.

Let me illustrate the problem in another way. In 1950, Dr. Charles E. Martin, the director of this Institute, and I made a trip around the world, in the course of which we visited a score of countries. Having been briefed in advance by certain high government officials in Washington, D. C., on current problems affecting our foreign diplomacy, we went out of our way to study our approved documents released 1999/09/10 : CIA-RDP83-00423R000100780001-4 them with

the Russians'. We talked with Ambassadors, Ministers, Public Information Officers, foreign statesmen, business men and men and women in many walks of life. It was the same kind of a survey which you would want to make if you were interested in this field.

We found a growing and frightening misunderstanding of American aims and purposes particularly in the middle east, the subcontinent of Asia and the far east, but also in Europe.

In many countries we found America being identified as the leader of counter revolutions opposed to the new nationalist ferment of former colonial peoples. Incredible, you say, for America has been the friend of oppressed peoples and herself revolted against Imperial control and helped scores of other republics to revolt. Incredible, yes, but true.

Remember that the Gracchi were as much a part of Roman history as Nero; that Goethe was as much a son of Germany as Bismarck and Hitler; that Sun Yat Sen was more admired and loved by the Chinese people than Mao Tse Tung. Our own complacency, our own failure to act, to accept the mantle of leadership in the

western world, may force us into a position of being counter revolutionists in the opinion of others. For no nation is static either in its methods or in its ideals. In the end it is how we handle ourselves that will impress others, and in the measure that we accept the yoke as well as the mantle of leadership, will we convince the editors, educators and officials of other nations of our sincerity, and they in turn their own peoples.

Nearly everyone with whom we talked felt that we were not getting our message sufficiently across and that the most effective way to do it was from within.

The spreading of American information and propaganda abroad is largely the responsibility of public affairs or information officers attached to our embassies, missions and consulates. In detailed conversations with dozens of them, the almost unanimous observations of these well trained and seasoned men and women were as follows: Let us have abroad more trained and mature analysts of propaganda in the field who can detect and expose from day to day the communist propaganda which is being directed against America and the free world. Let us have abroad more people who are well

informed on American foreign policy, who can make daily contacts with editors, news men, radio commentators, government officials, business men and others, and explain to them in a friendly, understanding way, American aims. Let us give to these national leaders, who are responsible for forming the mould of public opinion within their own countries, the tools with which they can work: -- background material, explaining American decisions, news releases, photographs, pamphlets and all of the other paraphernalia of an information campaign. For, as these people told us, most of the people responsible for operating newspapers, magazines, radio stations, etc., do not have enough of the sources of information which are so familiar to us in the western world. They are hungry for material. They want to know more about America, but most of what they hear comes indirectly to them from Russian subversive sources and elsewhere. What they need is information, interpretation, analysis and understanding. I would say that most of the well informed nationals of these countries abroad are potentially friendly to us and, given half the opportunity, will carry forward

the cause of freedom many times more effectively than is being done today, and far more satisfactorily than if we tried to do it alone. I must say in passing that our public affairs and information officers abroad and the members of their staffs are doing a magnificent job considering limitations of personnel and funds. Being so limited, they can only scratch the surface.

In cities like Bombay and Calcutta, a majority of the large circulation newspapers are printing each day scores of articles with vicious anti-American propaganda. The friendly American newspaper is almost non-existent in these two largest cities of India. We cannot blame their readers if, under this constant false indoctrination, they may fall prey to communist propaganda.

It must also be borne in mind that we do have some explaining to do. Just to take two examples, most of even the best informed people abroad find it difficult to understand our position with reference to Indo-China and Tunisia. There are explanations, although not necessarily wholly satisfactory, but certainly sufficient to refute completely the false charge that the United States

The important thing is that by daily and personal contact with leaders of public opinion, both high and low, we must make it increasingly clear that we want to share with them the crusade for world peace and human welfare, and that it is not in any sense the policy of this country to achieve world wide supremacy for our singular conceptions of political and economic life, however dear and appropriate they may be for our domestic use. We must let them know that we do not intend to force them to agree with us as a condition for our aid or cooperation with them or the United Nations. Even if they do take issue with us on many questions of policy and upon methods, the important thing is that they line up on our side on the issue of freedom, as exhibited in the Korean truce vote about ten days ago at the United Nations.

There are dozens of media and methods of psychological warfare which could be used in addition to those which have already been mentioned, but time does not permit a full discussion of them.

For example, serious wedges can be driven into the Soviet diplomatic front. There are many ways to do this, but one certain

selected puppet states of information which is both truthful, according to our own best knowledge, and plausible even to people who are starving for news. This information can be made available to masses of people in colloquial forms, both oral, written and pictorial and at surprisingly little cost compared to the results which may be achieved. Let us remember that rumors travel fast where news is censored.

This strategy can sow real seeds of doubt in the minds of many as to whether Stalinist directed communism conflicts with or may undermine their own nationalism. If this can be done, and I think it could, then Russia would appear as the counter revolutionist against the new nation states.

The Chinese have a basic respect for the individual, the family and the village. It may be that they begin to realize the tremendous losses of Chinese soldiers and resources. Could they begin to suspect that Stalin is using the Korean war as a testing ground for future conflicts, and is willing to bleed China of its military manpower to test Russia's newest military weapons? Is

China a mere pawn in a larger game of chess? The answer is probably

yes. At least Tito seems to have believed that it might apply to Yugoslavia.

I do not underestimate the problem and the difficulties. Always there is the danger of activating premature resistance from within. But the potentialities are great -- the possibilities are more than fair, and the overall risks are slight if proper timing and an adequate plan are professionally formulated and implemented.

Let me conclude by saying that I do not want to leave the impression that there should be any diminution in the amount of information and news which we broadcast or distribute from this country to foreign lands. It should be increased rather than decreased. My main purpose is to emphasize the greater importance and effectiveness of doing indirectly what cannot be done as well directly. We must work with and through the peoples of other lands. Their own inspiration will reinforce the crusade for freedom. Then it becomes their torch, as well as ours. As a result, even though they may not always agree with us on details and methods, they will

close ranks with us when the crises arise and their and our security  
is in danger.

Herbert S. Little